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## **October 2002, Injury Prevention Newsletter**

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**There are no Injury Prevention Observances for November 2002**

### **Alaska News & Resources**

1. International Walk to School Day
2. Kenai SAFE KIDS Coalition receives award from National SAFE KIDS Campaign

3. FAA "Circle of Safety" program
4. Annual EMS Symposium

### **National News and Resources**

5. Safety commission looks at ATV use
6. "LATCH" - new car seats are a snap
7. CDC: Thousands of children visit ER for choking
8. Think safety when heating
9. Sparks fly at gas stations, but why?

### **Miscellaneous**

10. Web resources for injury prevention

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1. International Walk to School Day was Wednesday October 2. This was the 4th years that parents were asked to walk their children's daily route to and from school and report potential problems such as poor lighting or the lack of a safe waiting area at the bus stop. Schools in Anchorage, Kenai, Juneau and Fairbanks participated this year. The program is designed to promote safety, physical activity, reduce traffic problems near school and bring attention to the environment our children encounter every day as they walk to school such as encounters with dogs or as the snow falls and sidewalks disappear sharing the streets with cars. Incentives included reflector zipper pulls and reflectorized vests and backpacks. For more information on the International Walk to School Day you can visit their website at: [www.iwalktoschool.org](http://www.iwalktoschool.org)

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2. Kenai SAFE KIDS Coalition received the National SAFE KIDS Campaign award for the most innovative program earlier this month at it's Annual Leadership Conference in Washington D.C. In Alaska, snowmachine injuries hospitalize between 40-50 youth (age 0-19) each year. In the Kenai Peninsula off road vehicle injuries are the third leading cause of injury hospitalization for youth 0-19 years of age. The snowmachine safety program developed by the Kenai SAFE KIDS Coalition targets parents and their children to increase awareness of dangers and responsibilities in snowmachine use. The programs goals were to assist parents in deciding if a snowmachine is a good choice for their child, to encourage responsible choices and behaviors among youth, to encourage helmet use among all riders and to reduce injuries due to snowmachines. This program with it's handouts, video, and displays has been made available through the Alaska Injury Surveillance and Prevention Program and will be presented at the EMS Symposium on Thursday November 14 as part of the Winter Safety program. If you would like more information on the program please contact Zoann Murphy at: [zoann\\_murphy@health.state.ak.us](mailto:zoann_murphy@health.state.ak.us) Congratulations to Jane Fellman and the Kenai SAFE KIDS Coalition on this award.

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3. FAA "Circle of Safety" program. As reported by Allen Baker of the Associated Press

The old image of the Bush Pilot - Alaska's cowboy of the air - may be a thing of the past as safety officials try to cut the death toll from airplane crashes. "Studies by the NTSB (National Transportation Safety Board) in 1980 and 1995 found that pilot and passenger attitudes toward flying in Alaska are problematic," said John Duncan, manager of the FAA's Alaska flight standards division. The "Circle of Safety" program is starting with an education package for large customers of the rural carriers. The idea is that those groups can set their own safety standards and encourages air travelers to take responsibility for the risks they take every time they fly. The FAA wants travelers, especially Bush travelers, to refuse to fly unless they feel safe. The FAA first will target 15 school districts around the state that charter flights for student travel. Aviation safety program managers will present the new concept, train coordinators, and provide continuing support. Eventually, FAA officials hope the strategy will spread to individual travelers, hunters flying to remote lodges, and everyone who flies. For the FAA, it's worthwhile to concentrate on safety in Alaska. In the air taxi category, for instance, the state had a third of the U.S. crashes logged last year (an average of 35 per year). "The pilot also feels pressure from employers who want to retain passengers and travelers who want to get home or make another connection," Duncan said. Carrier safety records can be viewed at: [www.alaska.faa.gov/flt-std/SystemSafety/operator.pdf](http://www.alaska.faa.gov/flt-std/SystemSafety/operator.pdf) Flight safety information can be viewed at: [www.alaska.faa.gov/flt-std/index.html](http://www.alaska.faa.gov/flt-std/index.html)

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4. Annual EMS Symposium - Another reminder and no, it is not too late to register The Injury Prevention Track at the 27th Annual EMS Symposium November 14-16, 2002 promises to be very exciting and informative. There will be sessions on prevention of cold weather injuries such as frostbite and hypothermia, crash injury mechanisms, avalanche safety, snowmachine safety and sports injuries and prevention (targeting on head injuries). The schedule and registration can be downloaded from: [www.sremsc.org/symposium.html](http://www.sremsc.org/symposium.html)

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5. Safety Commission looks at ATV use. As reported by Siobhan McDonough for The Associated Press The Consumer Product Safety Commission is looking into whether regulations are needed to prevent children under age 16 from using all-terrain vehicles made for adults. "What we've noticed is an increase in injuries and deaths. The question is why," says Commission spokesman Ken Giles. The review is at the request of physicians and consumer groups concerned with the increase of children injuries and deaths from ATVs which included the Consumer Federation of America (CFA), the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Academy of Emergency Physicians. The commission estimates that between 1993-2001, the number of injuries caused by ATVs more than doubled. Also, between 1982 and 2001, 1,714 children under 16 were killed while riding ATVs, 38% of the total fatalities. In Alaska there were 147 hospitalizations from 1994-1999 for children age 14 and under (25% of the total) and 11 deaths. The government and the industry signed a court-approved agreement in 1988 banning the manufacture of three-wheeled ATVs. The agreement required ATV distributors to use their "best effort" to assure that dealers do not sell adult-size ATVs to children under 16. The advocacy groups say the rising death and injuries caused by ATVs indicate the guidelines are not working. "They are falling short," says Rachel Weintraub, assistant general counsel to the CFA. "Children are being killed and injured by adult ATVs. The four-wheelers are proving to be almost as dangerous as the three-wheelers." The Consumer Product Safety Commission's website is: [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)

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6. "LATCH" - new car seats are a snap. As reported by Sandi Gerjevic for The Anchorage Daily News. When it comes to installing car seats, Peggy Hayashi, the state coordinator for Alaska's SAFE KIDS, has seen it all. All wrong, this is. Parents install their child restraint seats wrong about 90% of the time. Lower Anchors and Tethers from Children (LATCH) is new standard equipment for vehicles manufactured after August 2002. The LATCH system is designed to simplify child safety

seat installation by making it unnecessary to use the vehicle's seat belts to secure the restraint. Instead it uses vehicle anchorage and child restraint attachments to secure the seat. Some late-model vehicles can be retrofitted with the LATCH system and LATCH attachment kits are available from some car seat manufacturers. Parents should check with their dealers and their car seat manufacturer. Booster seats for older children still must be attached with the car's seat belts. The LATCH system's greatest drawback according to Hayashi, may be that it will take years for all kids to benefit. Some parents are still using hand-me-down car seats that should have been discarded years ago. What's more, Hayashi cited observational studies that show many parents ignore the seats altogether, opting to hold babies and toddlers in their laps while in transit. Still LATCH is a positive step in protecting kids, and safety advocates like SAFE KIDS are working toward 100% compliance.

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7. CDC: Thousands of children visit ER for choking: Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 2002;51:945-948

More than 17,000 adolescents and children were treated in U.S. emergency departments in 2001 for choking on candy, coins or some other substance, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported on October 24, 2002. The new findings are based on an analysis of data from the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System-All Injury Program. This is the first time the CDC has conducted an analysis of non-fatal ER visits for choking-related episodes according to Dr. Julie Gilchrist of the CDC and as reported to Reuters Health. "All children are at risk for choking because food is a choking risk," Gilchrist said. "Parents need to be aware of it." Nearly 60% of the patients in the study, including 3/4 of the 5-14 year olds, choked on food, including candy or gum. In fact, 1 in 4 children in that age group had a choking episode associated with candy or gum. Hard candy was the culprit behind the majority of candy-related choking episodes, but chocolate candy, gummy candy, and chewing gum were also involved. Furthermore, almost 1/3 of the children choked on nonfood substances. 18% of children 1-4 years, for example, were treated for coin-related choking episodes. According to the Alaska Trauma Registry about 17 children 3 and under are hospitalized for choking and swallowing injuries with coins causing the most hospitalizations. For more information you can access this report at: [www.cdc.gov/mmwr](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr)

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8. Think Safety When Heating. As reported in the Fairbanks New-Miner:

The fact is that household heating equipment is the second-leading cause of home fires in the United States. It is the leading cause during the months of December, January, and February. Most home fires can be attributed to the misuse or improper maintenance of the home's heating source. The National Fire Protection Association and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission have some advice for winter fire prevention:

- Make sure heating equipment is installed properly; have a qualified technician inspect and tune up the system each season.
- Install and periodically check smoke detectors and carbon monoxide alarms throughout your home.
- Keep portable space heaters at least three feet from flammable materials such as bedding or furniture.
- Never leave children or pets unattended where there is a space heater in use
- Fireplace chimneys and flues should be inspected every year.
- Wood-burning stoves should sit on an approved stove board.
- Never use you cook stove or oven to heat your home even for the shortest period of time
- Keep a multipurpose, dry chemical fire extinguisher within easy reach in your home
- Pre-determine and be familiar with exit from each room in your house.
- Practice with your family getting out of the home in case of a fire

For more information you can visit the National Fire Protection Association at: [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org) or the Consumer Product Safety Commission at: [www.cpsc.org](http://www.cpsc.org)

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#### 9. Sparks Fly at Gas Stations, but Why?

A national campaign was launched by The Petroleum Equipment Institute (PEI) in October urging gas station owners to install cards warning consumers about the dangers of flash fires at gas pumps. The cause? Static electricity. There are more than 200 confirmed cases of flash fires at gas stations across the country. As reported by Denver Channel 7 Tracy Bronkin and her children learned firsthand how frightening static can be while filling up at a gas station. "As soon as I touched the nozzle the flames were everywhere. My hair, the gas pump, the gas tank. Everything was on fire," Bronkin said. She wasn't smoking or running the engine. Her mistake was getting back in the car. "I got back in my van to write my check like I've done a million times before," Bronkin said. The "Stop Static" campaign recommends four rules for making refueling a vehicle safer: 1. Turn off the engine. 2. Extinguish any cigarette. 3. Don't get in and out of the car during refueling. 4. Touch anything metal before you go for the nozzle, it will take the static off you. Some of the other findings reported by PEI include that all of the flash fires took place on days of dry weather, usually cold weather, and that the drivers mostly wore shoes with rubber soles. The PEI also reports that cell phones were not responsible for any fires. So what do you do in case of a flash fire? Leave the nozzle in the fill pipe and back away from the vehicle. Notify the attendant and activate any emergency shut-off lever or button. The experts say the fire will eventually burn itself out. For more information click on:

[www.pei.org/static](http://www.pei.org/static)

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#### 10. Web Resources for Injury Prevention

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission protects the public from unreasonable risks of injury or death from 15,000 types of consumer products under the agency's jurisdiction. To report a dangerous product or a product-related injury, call CPSC's hotline at **800-638-2772** or CPSC's teletypewriter at **800-638-8270**. Other information about the CPSC is available on the web at: [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)

MEDLINE is the National Library of Medicine's database of references to more than 11 million articles published in 4300 biomedical journals. There are many injury, safety, and prevention topics and links. When you search MEDLINE you will find information about articles on your topic, short summaries of the article and sometimes you will find a link to the full article. You can access the main page at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov>

OR you can subscribe to it's list server to be alerted of new information at [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/listserv/resources\\_assistance.htm](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/listserv/resources_assistance.htm)

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This message has been compiled by the Section of Community Health and EMS (CHEMS), Alaska Division of Public Health and sent to subscribers of the AK-Prev and AHELP list-serves. It has also been sent as a "bcc" to others in Alaska including Public Health Centers, SAFE KIDS coalitions, Native Health organizations, and regional EMS Councils and Coordinators who may be interested and active in injury prevention and health promotion. The purpose is to share resources, breaking news, training opportunities, product recalls, and opinions to help prevent injuries to Alaskans. Feedback and contributions are encouraged. Contributions can be directed to Zoann Murphy: [zoann\\_murphy@health.state.ak.us](mailto:zoann_murphy@health.state.ak.us)

Link for the AK-Prev and AK-EMSC list-serve:

[http://chems.alaska.gov/ems\\_list\\_servers.htm](http://chems.alaska.gov/ems_list_servers.htm)

Link for the AHELP list serve:

<http://www.auroraweb.com/ahec>

